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Marlene H. Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
445 12th Street SW, TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

Re: CapTel Petition by Ultratec - Docket 98-67

Dear Commissioners:

As a former executive director of TDI (then Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc.) who assisted in writing Title IV of the ADA and the FCC develop effective programs for people with disabilities in early 90's, I am sending my comments supporting the CapTel petition submitted by Ultratec. In addition, I was responsible for the implementation of effective telecommunications relay services (TRS) among the TRS providers.

I have observed quite a few CapTel demonstrations in various settings and would like to share with you my personal experiences.

At the recent National Association of the Deaf Conference and DeafWayII, which were held in Washington, DC, I actually saw quite a few tearful and emotional reactions people with hearing disabilities had after making their first direct conversations through the CapTel TRS service!

A few months earlier, I met an elderly woman in a retirement home who had a cochlear implant. She expressed frustration for not being able to communicate with her two daughters residing in different parts of the country. After introducing her to CapTel, she and her daughters were full of tears!

These emotional scenes reminds me of a mother's reaction when her child was rescued from an attempted kidnap or when the boy saw his dog, Lassie, being alive at the end of the "Lassie Comes Home" movie.

Of about 28-32 million Americans who have hearing disabilities, about 50% of them will benefit from CapTel services.

In closing, I trust that the FCC will make a wise decision by recognizing CapTel TRS.

Sincerely,

Alfred Sonnenstrahl